



Admissions Policy

Approved by: Jayson Rawlings

Date: September 2026

Last reviewed on: September 2026

Next review due by: September 2027

1. Aims

This policy aims to provide guidance for parents, carers and prospective students on the admissions and referrals process at Cherry Tree School

Cherry Tree School is an Independent Specialist School for young people aged 5 to 19 with social, emotional and mental health needs and social and communication difficulties, associated with Autism Spectrum Conditions or similar diagnosis.

Cherry Tree School offers specialist education in a calm, nurturing and therapeutic environment following a Thrive Approach. A broad and bespoke academic and personal development curriculum including Entry Levels, Functional Skills and GCSE qualifications in class sizes of 6-8 students with a SEN Classroom Teacher and Learning Support Assistant in each class.

The school will offer up to 120 placements across primary and secondary.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

Cherry Tree School offers a clear and supportive process for young people, parents and carers including access to relevant school policies and paperwork via the school website to ensure a successful admission into the school and provide support where SENDIST requests require additional information.

3. Scope

This policy aims to provide guidance on Cherry Tree School admission process for parents, carers and prospective students. This policy is also used in reference to support consultations via the local authorities who wish to consider placement at Cherry Tree School. The policy will also be used as a reference guide for all staff involved in the admissions process.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher and the SLT Team manage referrals and visits to the school, holding regular open evenings and assessment consultations with children, parents and families.

5. Admissions process

5.1 Enquiries and referrals

New referrals can be submitted via our website or through direct enquiries to the school. We welcome visits to the school through our regular open evenings where we will be available to discuss our offer and vision for Cherry Tree School. We would encourage any prospective parents/carers to attend our open evenings in the first instance. If a referral to SENDIST is impending, please contact the school directly and we will arrange a visit to the school.

5.2 Assessment Process

We will ask you to consult through the local authority if you feel that Cherry Tree School is suitable for your child or young person. We will always consult with the local authority. We

require up to date information, including relevant documents such as the most recent EHCP, previous school reports, medical information including any risk assessments, clinical observations to help assist with our initial assessment.

On receipt of the documentation, the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will review the paperwork and the EHCP to see if they feel they can meet the requirements of the EHCP. We consider at this point the needs, presentations, behaviours and environmental impact, therapeutic needs, alongside the requirements of section F and if we feel our school can support the young person through its core offer, or period of intervention combined with the core offer, would mean that the school is suitable for the child's needs.

The school will then arrange for the parents and/or carers to visit The Oaks with the child or young person. We will conduct a walk and talk assessment, getting to know the child/young person and an understanding of their needs through a child-centred approach and discussing with the family.

Following this, the SENDCO or Pastoral Manager, will conduct a visit to the previous or current school to gain insight into the environment and working at levels. They will meet with the school's SENCO and/or Headteacher to discuss the young person, strategies to support and gain an understanding of the young person's needs in more detail. Observations of the child will include information gathering about educational interests, skills and challenges.

5.3 Following assessment phase

Cherry Tree School SLT will discuss the young person following completion. If the school feel that they can meet need, the Headteacher will return the consultation to the local authority, outlining their offer and associated fees.

In order for us to offer a place, there will need to be a formal application and written agreement of funding from the funding authorities. We can then send a formal offer letter to the funding authority with a copy to parents/carers. Contracts issued by Cherry Tree School to the LA must be signed and returned to the Headteacher before the placement can start.

Following agreement of the placement with the local authority placement commissioners, a start date for transition will be agreed. Parents and the young person will receive communication from Cherry Tree School outlining the next steps and a date for a final consultation meeting to discuss start date, transition plans and a meeting to discuss personalised learning plans and positive behaviour support plans with the Pastoral Manager.

5.4 Transition

All transitions are carefully planned with the parents/ carers, and child or young person's voice included in all plans. Each transition period is personalised with the student's needs and wishes taken into consideration whilst also considering the needs of the students currently in the class the young person or child may be in.

Transition may include a phased entry over a period to enable each child to acclimatise to a new setting and staff and for existing students to be prepared for the change in the group. During the first three months of the placement the students' abilities and needs will be fully observed and programmes of learning amended where necessary and personalised learning plans, and positive behaviour support plans adapted to become more reflective as the child or young person settles into life at Cherry Tree School.

5.5 Induction period

We would anticipate an induction period being completed within 3 months or following 4 weeks of full-time education. Staff working directly with the student will observe the level of independence, learning abilities and any support that may be required to meet the EHCP targets. They will conduct a review meeting with the Pastoral Manager, AHT/SENDCO and parents/carers to discuss the end of the induction process and next steps.

These initial observations allow us to determine the student's needs, evaluate the staffing levels required, refine any need for clinical input as well as support us in setting appropriate and achievable learning targets for the future.

If concerns are raised during induction regarding the safety and wellbeing of the student or other students, the student may be required to follow a revised approach with a clear plan to support the child and young person in accessing education. This may include clinical staff, Speech and Language Therapists or Occupational Therapists or implantation of reduced timetables to support the needs of the young person.

If concerns remain, then professionals at the review meeting or subsequent network meeting will discuss the feasibility of the placement. If we determine that we cannot meet need we will communicate this to parents/carers and the local authority. We will provide 28 days' notice of the school placement offer being withdrawn.

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and SLT School Business Manager and ratified by the Operations Director.